

critical issues with regard to the climate crisis now.

I have directly witnessed the devastating effects of wildfires on homes and livelihoods in my community, which is why I am proud to support this bill and urge my colleagues to vote “yes” with me.

Current wildfires are growing larger and hotter, requiring urgent and robust action from the Federal Government. The FIRE Act allows FEMA to predeploy assets during high-risk times, improves relocation assistance for public infrastructure affected by fires, and ensures equity of assistance for Tribal communities and governments.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this amended bill.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF BRANDON TSAI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Officer Brandon Tsai. He was a brave member of the Grand Prairie Police Department, and he died in the line of duty this past week.

Officer Tsai bravely protected the people of north Texas and the city of Grand Prairie since January of this year, after serving 5 years with the Los Angeles Police Department.

The Grand Prairie Police Department described Officer Tsai as a loving friend, a trusted colleague, and outstanding officer whose passion provided service to the public.

I join the entire north Texas community and all of his brothers and sisters in blue in all of the metroplex departments in keeping Officer Brandon Tsai's family, friends, and all of his colleagues at the city of Grand Prairie in our thoughts and prayers during this time.

#### RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to engage in a limited, but hopefully important, discussion about America's history and to encourage my colleagues for collaboration. It is in reference to H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Slavery and Develop Reparation Proposals.

I stand on the perspective of how important it is for us to engage in dialogue. We are hearing across America that Americans are frightened about the discussion of our differences.

This land was first held by the indigenous people, Native Americans. Every other group came to America, whether or not you are of European heritage, Hispanic heritage, Asian-Pacific, Southeast Asian, or whether you are African heritage. As a descendant of

enslaved Africans, we are the only group that came as slaves to this country and held in bondage for over 200 years.

You have not seen African Americans refuse their patriotism, refuse to serve. We have served in every war since the Revolutionary War.

You have never seen African Americans refuse to shed blood for the freedom of this country or to wear the uniform.

You have not seen us shy away from serving as firefighters and law enforcement, teachers, businesspersons, social justice leaders, such as Dr. King, John Lewis, and, yes, Malcolm X.

You have not seen us, as women—Rosa Parks, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Coretta Scott King—stand away from the fight. We have embraced freedom, justice, and equality.

You did not see us attack this most solid and somber institution, sacred, on January 6, 2021. We were not the masses that were trying to undermine democracy. In fact, in this last election, I stood on the premise of defending democracy, and I take no back seat to my love of this Nation.

And so I ask my colleagues, why do you in any way doubt the value and importance of H.R. 40? The purpose is to acknowledge the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery.

It was based on the premise of racism. There was, in fact, no compensation, no life insurance, no salaries. Slaves were born, lived, and died in slavery, never seeing freedom. They worked from sunup and beyond, and they worked until they fell dead in the fields.

They built this Nation. They built the United States Capitol. They built the White House. They, in fact, created an economic engine by making cotton king, and they created an economic engine by this transatlantic slave trade.

The traders decided to stop trading spices and gold and to use the human beings that they marched for 300 miles to weaken the slaves so they would not have a fight before getting on those ships. Many dropped into the watery grave before they got on. Many died in the dark passage.

But yet, here we are today.

And so this is not pointing the finger. This is not accusatory. This is, in fact, a reconciliation. I insist that we establish this commission, and we must establish it by a vote or establish it by executive order.

Reverend Mark Thompson, a political activist for social justice, said: If we were granted H.R. 40 by executive order, it would be America once and for all saying Black lives actually do matter and this Nation must be repaired. It is restoration and repair, but it stands on the basis of facts. There is no doubt that we have been impacted, that DNA in the trajectory of slavery to today.

For example, COVID, Black African Americans got COVID at a rate nearly 1½ times higher than that of White people, were hospitalized at a rate nearly 4 times higher, and 3 times more likely to die. COVID hit us very desperately.

Interestingly, a recent peer-reviewed study from Harvard Medical School suggests that reparations for African Americans could have cut COVID-19 transmission and infection rates both among Blacks and the population at large. Reparations are curative, they are not punishment. The analysis continued to look at data throughout the Nation.

And so as we move in this lame duck session, it is important that we come together for reconciliation, restoration, and provide the Commission to Study Slavery and to Develop Reparation Proposals.

I thank my colleagues for their support, and I believe together we make America strong, America free, America just, and America equal.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to have authored H.R. 40, legislation that establishes a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans. Congress must pass this bill to begin the process toward reconciliation with the Black community. I have also called upon President Biden to create the H.R. 40 Commission by Executive Order.

The purpose of H.R. 40 is to acknowledge the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of slavery in the U.S. and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans. The Commission is also charged to make recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies.

Now—more than ever—the timing is ripe for the enactment of H.R. 40. We have a President in the White House who has expressed his undeniable support and we urge President Biden to institute this executive order.

My Democratic colleagues in the 117th Congress and I have made historic strides in advancing H.R. 40 since it was first introduced in 1989 by the late Michigan Congressman Rep John Conyers. H.R. 40 garnered more support over the past 33 years; it has approximately 200 co-sponsors, including 25 U.S. senators. Also, it is supported by over 300 organizations and allies, including the National Conference of Mayors.

One of my top priorities for this lame duck session of Congress in November and December, regardless of who controls Congress, is to have H.R. 40 pass the House of Representatives because. This will send a message of broad support to President Biden and strengthen our hand in urging him to create the Commission to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals through Executive Order.

Reparations are overdue. Our entire country needs reparations, to allow us to move forward as an untied society.

The concept of reparations is a well-established principle of international law, defined as the act or process of repairing or restoring.

It is payment for an injury; redress for a wrong done. In the context of Black people in